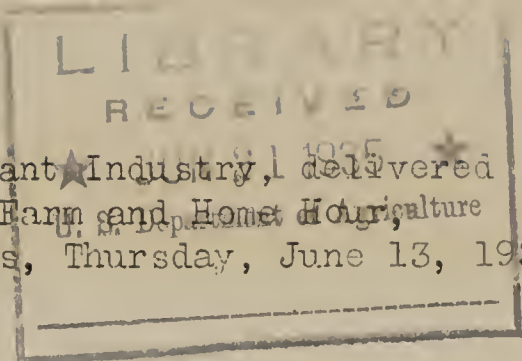


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, June 13, 1935.

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Hello Folks. I hope you enjoyed our little strawberry roundup last Thursday but I wish you could have looked in upon the gang here in the studio at the close of the program sampling Mrs. Beattie's strawberry sunshine preserves. That was the part that we could not put on the air without television. By the way Miss Van Deman told you how to make strawberry sunshine preserves, but some of you may not have been able to write the directions down and I am sure Miss Van Deman will be glad to send you the proportions of sugar and berries and the method of making the preserves. Or, I shall be glad to send you Mrs. Beattie's recipe for strawberry sunshine preserves which was handed down to her from her great grandmother Catherine Byrd of Virginia.

Now there were several points touched upon in our strawberry program last Thursday that I would like to refer to and emphasize today. As you know wonderful progress has been made during the past century in the improvement of all crops, horticultural crops in particular. Take the strawberry for example as Dr. Darrow pointed out, there have been a number of very outstanding and remarkable varieties developed from our two native wild species. These are the Virginiana or wild strawberry of the Eastern States and the Chiloensis or wild strawberry of Chili and our Pacific Coast country, commonly known as the "Beach" strawberry because it grows only within a mile of the waters edge. Many more varieties have been bred from these wild sorts, also by crossing the various varieties.

This is a big country with a great variety of soil and climatic conditions and when it comes to developing varieties of fruits and other crops to suit these varying conditions we are faced by a big problem. You may recall that Dr. Darrow told you last Thursday that the Dorsett strawberry, which is one of the newer varieties, is especially adapted for growing in the middle west where the rainfall is sometimes rather short during midsummer. The Dorsett makes rather too many plants in the eastern sections but makes a sufficient number in the sections where the rainfall is not so great. The Blakemore was bred for preserving berry and has a firm flesh and tart flavor. The Fairfax is well adapted for the eastern sections, and so it goes, special sorts to suit each and every condition and purpose, and it is the plant breeders job to produce these special sorts.

Now I want to give you a few practical suggestions about the care of your strawberries during the summer. I know from personal experience how easy it is to forget all about the strawberries after the berries are gone and simply allow the patch to go to weeds. That method will never get you good fruit for next season and right now is the time to begin growing the crop for next year. If you intend to renovate the old bed then mow the tops and rake them off then chop out, thin out and clean out the most of the old plants. I am speaking now of the regular spring-fruiting varieties and not the everbearing. Varieties like the Dorsett that make plenty of new plants should be thinned so that the clumps will stand fully 24 inches apart in the rows. These are the mother plants that send out the runners and produce the new plants and it is on the new plants that you get your good berries next year. After the plants are thinned and the old trash all taken out it is a good plan to scatter a little fertilizer all around and

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between the plants and work it into the soil. That will stimulate the old plants and also provide nutrients for the new plants. Any large vacant spaces may be filled in by taking a spade or shovel and lifting a few of the old clumps with plenty of soil and setting them in the vacant spaces.

Now it happens that the everbearing varieties do not, as a rule, make a large number of new plants so the old ones must be kept and well cared for. The buds that produce the fall crop of fruit on the everbearings are formed during midsummer and for that reason the everbearings should be given the best of care during July and August. They may need watering during this midsummer period and they should by all means be kept well cultivated and free of weeds. The spring-bearing sorts form their fruit buds in the late summer and fall. Early summer is their plant making period and the late summer and early fall the fruit-bud forming period so you will readily see that both of these periods are important in the production of a good crop of berries.

Now just a word about the spacing of the strawberry plants, and this will apply to other small fruits as well. Recent experiments have shown that both the total yield and the size of the berries is reduced by allowing the plants to become crowded. In these tests the best yields of marketable berries were obtained where the plants were 8 to 12 inches apart. At 4 to 6 inch spacing the yields were only about half those of the 10 or 12 inch spacing so when you thin out your old berry patch this year do a complete job. Last year I allowed the plants in my patch to remain entirely too thick and as a result our berries were small this season and besides I think the flavor was not as good as usual.

I hope you will not think that I have unduly emphasized this matter of proper handling of strawberry beds but the strawberry is our most important small fruit and I want to see all of you get the greatest amount of pleasure and good from your berries.

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